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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; May 19, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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Chosun Ilbo, All TVs  
Seoul National University Hospital  
to Accept Non-Resuscitation Requests

JoongAng Ilbo  
Science High Schools to Select 30 to 50 Percent  
of Students through Admissions Officer System

Dong-a Ilbo, Segye Ilbo  
Foreign Language High Schools to be Banned from Administering  
Written Exams to Applicants for 2010 Admission; Science High Schools  
to Remove Spots Reserved for Applicants who have Won in Mathematics  
or Science Competitions

Hankook Ilbo  
"Global Partisan War" Splits Overseas Korean Communities: Since ROKG  
Granted Korean Nationals Overseas the Right to Vote in General and  
Presidential Elections, Rival Parties  
Are Speeding up Efforts to Establish Support Bases in U.S., Japan  
and China

Hankyoreh Shinmun  
Prosecution Seeks Arrest Warrants for 32 Unionized Truckers for  
Violent Street Protest... Conflict Intensifies between Labor Circles  
and the Government

Seoul Shinmun  
"Three Dilemmas" in ROK Economy: Excess Liquidity, Falling Exchange  
Rates and Record-High Current Account Surplus

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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Seoul's plan to hold government-level talks with North Korea  
yesterday on the Kaesong Industrial Complex fell through as  
Pyongyang did not respond to Seoul's latest proposal. Seoul  
officials, however, said that they will continue efforts to bring  
the North to the dialogue table. (All)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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According to a recent report by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, North Korea's dependence on trade with China hit a record high of 73 percent last year and keeps growing. (Dong-a, Hankook)

## MEDIA ANALYSIS

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### -North Korea

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The aborted inter-Korean government-level talks yesterday received wide press coverage. The ROK media reported that North Korea did not respond to the ROK's proposal for a meeting yesterday. The ROKG plans to make another offer for talks at an appropriate time, but chances are slim that North Korea will respond swiftly to such an ROK overture, according to media reports.

Moderate Hankook Ilbo quoted an ROKG source: "North Korea said during the April 21 meeting that it would take about a month to review and conclude new terms for the operation of the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Accordingly, there is a high possibility that North Korea may suggest a meeting in late May or early June."

### -Prisoner Abuse Photos

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Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo's New York correspondent opined: "Obama's change of mind (on releasing photographs documenting prisoner abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan by the American military) was due to the concerns of the military that publicizing such pictures could put the U.S. military at greater risk due to increased anti-U.S. sentiments. The liberal camp unleashed a barrage of criticism against Obama, complaining that Obama missed a good opportunity to liquidate the 'specter' of the Bush era. However, Obama was unwavering. He valued soldiers' lives over political calculations that might have driven the Bush Administration into a corner."

### -Obama-Netanyahu Meeting

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Moderate Hankook Ilbo and left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun carried inside-page reports on the upcoming May 18 meeting in Washington between President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Hankook raised the possibility that the two leaders might coordinate positions on a "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hankook headlined its article, "Obama's First Test on Middle East Peace." Hankyoreh's headline, meanwhile, read: "Obama-Netanyahu Meeting: Same Bed, Different Dreams for 'Palestine State'"

## OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

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OBAMA PUTS THE BRAKES ON "CAMPAIGN TO DEGRADE BUSH"  
(JoongAng Ilbo, May 19, Page 42)

By New York Correspondent Nam Jung-ho

In 1961, former Soviet Union Premier Khrushchev's campaign to degrade Stalin was at its height. At the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Union's communist party that year, a female revolutionist, who was in her 70s and an ardent admirer of Lenin, got up on the podium. Grabbing a microphone, she lambasted Stalin who passed away 8 years ago. She testified that she envisioned the late Lenin saying resentfully that it was too unpleasant to lie beside Stalin. At that time, Stalin's remains rested beside Lenin in the cemetery where Lenin was buried in Red Square in Moscow. It sounds like a joke (now) but at that time it seemed serious. Khrushchev, who

labeled Stalin as a 'slaughterer', also joined in the fierce criticism (against Stalin). In the end, Stalin's body was removed from Lenin's cemetery and buried miserably at one side of Red Square. The city 'Stalingrad', which had been named after Stalin, was renamed 'Volgograd.' All this happened when the campaign against Stalin was at its height.

It might be unbearably tempting for a new administration to criticize the previous government. This is because the new administration can secure moral superiority by disclosing errors of its predecessor. That is why, across the world, campaigns of a similar kind are being waged. Former Taiwanese Premier Chen Shui-bian's campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and former ROK President Roh Tae-woo's move to purge its predecessor of corruption were in the same vein.

The U.S. is not an exception. Recently, the Obama Administration has been actively engaged in a 'campaign to degrade Bush.' President Obama has revealed (information about) all kinds of human rights abuses that his predecessor, Bush, and his aides condoned under the name of the 'war on terrorism.' However, Obama made a surprisingly unexpected decision on May 13. He voiced his opposition to releasing photographs documenting prisoner abuse at U.S. military jails in Iraq and Afghanistan during Bush's term. The pictures in question show disgraceful human rights abuses, such as Iraqi and Afghan rebels hung head over heels, naked. Initially, Obama favored publicizing the pictures. He considered that the best policy was to expose the shameful past to the world and cut out festering scars. (However), he changed his mind due to the concerns

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of the military that publicizing the pictures could put the U.S. military at great risk due to increased anti-U.S. sentiments. The liberal camp unleashed a barrage of criticism against Obama, complaining that Obama missed a good opportunity to liquidate the 'specter' of the Bush era. However, Obama was unwavering. He valued soldiers' lives over political calculations that might have driven the Bush Administration into a corner.

These days, suspicions about corruption involving former President Roh Mu-hyun are growing. If the corruption allegations are proven, the campaign against former President Roh will surely gain full momentum. Of course, it is indisputable that President Roh should pay a price for any irregularities. However, we are concerned that a 'witch-hunt' campaign might be waged simply on the basis that an individual was involved with him or supported him. In particular, we are worried that this might undermine sound progressive civil groups. Deng Xiaoping blocked a campaign against Mao Zedong, which intensified after his death. What he feared was public divisiveness. We should consider this deeply.

STANTON